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### THE RELATIONS OF JUDAISM TO THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY

In the completeness of its survey of the subject, the sanity of its conclusions from the data, and the general clearness of its presentation, Dr. Hoennicke's book on early Jewish Christianity<sup>1</sup> seems fitted to take a high place in the literature that deals with the Jews of the first and second Christian centuries. The result at which the author arrives regarding the influence of Jewish Christians on early Christianity is in essential agreement with the conclusion reached by F. C. Baur, but this result is of greater value because it is better grounded in history. It is not a philosophical treatise that we have, elaborating a hypothesis, but a historical study. The sources of information, fragmentary and one-sided as they are, are used with care and judgment. The value of the work lies not so much in any new light it sheds on particular features of the general subject as in its connected and comprehensive view of the entire field.

It may be noted that the author, in speaking of the value of clear definition of terms, takes the word "Judaism" (*Judaismus*) in a sense unlike that which it has among us. He employs it to designate that form of Christianity which bore the marks of the Jewish national principle, and which therefore departed in some degree from the pure gospel. It denotes what we in English call "Judaizing Christianity."

In the survey of the Jews of the first two centuries the author seeks especially to answer the question, how far the thought of the Jews was particularistic and how far universalistic. Of the three main tendencies among the Jews in the first century—the Pharisaic, the Hellenistic, and the Apocalyptic—the Hellenistic was the most favorable to universalism, though the others also were to some extent lifted above the narrow national horizon. But nowhere among the Jews was there found the pure universalism of the gospel. The prerogatives of Israel were never wholly forgotten.

As to the success of the Christian mission among the Jews, the author seems to minimize it unduly. He says that the extension of Christianity among the Jews was "*nicht bedeutend*," that the number who confessed Jesus as their Messiah was "relatively slight." It was surely less than the number of Gentile converts, but we cannot doubt that the Jewish converts, especially in the period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, were exceedingly important in numbers as well as in their subsequent influence on the church. That the number of Jewish converts in the

<sup>1</sup>*Das Judenchristenthum im ersten und zweiten Jahrhundert.* Von Gustav Hoennicke, Ph.D., Lic. Theol. Berlin: Trowitssch & Sohn, 1908, 419 pages. M. 10.

Diaspora was not unimportant is most clearly to be inferred from the intensity and persistence of the opposition to the work of Paul. Nor can we wholly agree with the author's explanation of the fact that only few Jews accepted the gospel. It was doubtless a step that called for great sacrifices—rejection from the synagogue and loss of friends—but this was hardly the determining reason in most cases for refusing to take the step. That was rather the deep and wide contrast between the Jewish messianic expectation and Jesus. The great majority of serious Jews who saw and heard Jesus did not accept him, though there was then, at least until the last months of the ministry, no danger of excommunication if they accepted him. We think that, as in the lifetime of Jesus, so later, many, perhaps most, of the Jews who refused to accept Jesus were influenced chiefly by the startling lack of harmony between the national hopes and the alleged fulfilment.

The third chapter treats in detail of the rise and development of Judaistic Christianity. Though the demand that Gentile converts be circumcised was first made at Antioch, as the author says, we have no reason to think that it had not been implicit in the faith of a part of the mother church from the first. The apostles, it is thought, did not come out for Paul and his view of the Law in a clear and positive manner, but were reserved in their attitude toward him. Hence it was easy for the Judaizers to represent them as opposed to Paul.

Professor Hoennicke is of the opinion that the Judaizing tendency continued strong in Palestine after Paul's death, that Jewish Christians there regarded him as an apostate and an enemy of his people. Among the grounds of the decline and disappearance of the Judaistic tendency, especially in the Diaspora, it is of interest to note that the author puts the lack of the understanding of Paul's teaching. As his personal work had evoked the Judaistic tendency, so with his death it declined. His letters indeed remained with individual churches, but as his conception of the gospel was in a high degree individualistic, it was difficult for most people to understand it. Hence in the subsequent period his teaching as a whole had only slight influence on the churches.

The final chapter of Hoennicke's large volume treats of the influence of the Jewish religion on Christianity. Though the two were closely related at the start, there was something wholly new in Jesus, which was in a degree opposed to the old covenant. This new thing was, as the author well says, that Jesus *realized the rule of God*.

This new factor was darkened in later times by the Jewish spirit. It is of course not meant that all the points in which Jewish influence is mani-

fest in Christianity are departures from the purity of the gospel. The wide influence of the synagogue on the first companies of Christian believers is sketched without suggesting that it darkened the teaching of the gospel. Exception need be made only in the matter of early Christian interpretation of the Old Testament which, as the author says, was marked by the defects of the Jewish method. This point might perhaps have been treated with more fulness than it has received.

It may be noted in passing that Dr. Hoennicke opposes the view of Seeberg and others, that the earliest Christian instruction was based on a Jewish catechism for proselytes. The mere existence of lists of virtues and vices does not prove that the Jews used these in the instruction of proselytes, and the Christian lists, especially Paul's, are so various that it is difficult to suppose them copied from a Jewish catechism.

The larger part of the last chapter is devoted to the apostolic fathers, to ascertain how far their leading conceptions were molded by Jewish teaching. In their doctrine of God and Christ the author sees the influence of the Old Testament and later Jewish writings, particularly in the relative unimportance of the Christian element, e. g., Christ's teaching on the fatherhood of God, and in the large place taken by angels. It seems a mistake that the author, in discussing the view of pre-existence in *Hermas*, scarcely alludes to the manifest Greek influence, and that he does not indicate the source of Polycarp's phrase "the eternal high-priest."

Jewish influence in the conception of salvation as found in the apostolic fathers is especially prominent in the connection between sin and the world of evil spirits, and in the tendency to a legal view of the importance of works. The Law is replaced by the "command" of God and righteousness is thought to consist in outward performance rather than in the attitude of the heart.

The apostolic fathers show a notable influence of Jewish thought in their views of the church and the end of the world. Thus the church is represented as an exclusive body, outside of which death reigns. It guarantees salvation by its various rites. The church is an aeon created before the world.

The eschatology of the apostolic fathers follows largely the scheme of the Jewish apocalypses.

The author concludes this chapter with the statement that the fundamental Christian truths were obscured in the apostolic fathers by the influence of the Old Testament and Jewish teaching, and that sometimes the contrast between Jewish and Christian is quite lost.

One lays down Dr. Hoennicke's book with a regret that the author broke off his study with the apostolic fathers instead of carrying it at least through the second century.

Dr. Klein, a rabbi of Stockholm, has given an elaborate argument for the Jewish character of the primitive Didaché.<sup>2</sup> It does not therefore present a new thesis; for other scholars, e. g., Kohler in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, regard the Didaché as a Christian revision of a Jewish document, but it discusses the subject more broadly than any other writer. In the course of this discussion, after speaking of the two types of pre-exilic teaching—the priestly and the prophetic—the author examines various Jewish writings of a missionary character, in particular pseudo-Phocylides, the Testament of Eliezer the Great, the Tanna debe Eliahu, the Hypothetica and other writings of Philo. He shows that in this Propaganda literature emphasis was laid on the ethical life, on those duties which all men alike acknowledge. Ritual and ceremonial matters were neglected. This type of instruction was called *derech erez*. Of this, numerous traces are thought to be discernible in the New Testament. Thus the close parallelism between Rom. 12 and Ps. 34—that psalm which was followed by pseudo-Phocylides in what the author calls the earliest catechism for the gentiles—as well as Paul's phrase "type of doctrine," is taken as indicating that he used compendia of *derech erez* in his missionary work. Other passages that use the word "way," as those in Acts and Peter, are thought to point in the same direction.

The author's treatment of the Didaché, which does not aim to cover the entire field but only to supplement the existing commentaries by drawing upon Jewish material, has a distinct place and value in the literature of the subject. But it may be doubted whether the author, deeply conscious as he is of the Jewish background of the New Testament writings, realizes the extent of the Greek influence upon them. Thus, e. g., in speaking of the Johannean type of the teaching of Jesus, he makes the "hidden name"—*anivehu*—the central and determining feature. He seems to ignore the Prologue and its fundamental relation to the whole book. It may also be said that while the author distinguishes clearly between the conception of Christ held by the Twelve and that of Paul, he appears to overrate—as many Christian writers have no less conspicuously done—Paul's influence on the Christian religion, as, e. g., when he says that Christianity was born at Antioch—a statement which implies that Paul's conception of the person of Christ is essential Christianity.

<sup>2</sup>*Der älteste Christliche Katechismus und die jüdische Propaganda-Literatur.* Von Professor Dr. G. Klein, Berlin: Reimer, 1909. 273 pages. M. 6.

Dr. Schechter's book,<sup>3</sup> though having the same title as a series of articles contributed by him to the *Jewish Quarterly* a few years ago, is much more comprehensive. It treats of God, the kingdom of God, the election of Israel, the Law, the doctrine of merit, the law of holiness and goodness, sin, the evil Yezer, forgiveness and reconciliation, and repentance. These are fundamental features of Jewish theology on which "Catholic Israel" has always been in substantial agreement.

Disclaiming any attempt to treat the entire subject of rabbinic theology in a systematic fashion—which the author regards as an impossibility in the present state of knowledge on the subject—he discusses these important aspects of it in an interesting manner, known to readers of the *Journal* from his *Studies in Judaism* (1896). His point of view is naturally that of a believer in Israel's supreme mission to the world. "Judaism means to convert the world, not to convert itself" (p. 77). The kingdom of God will become fully effective in the world with Israel's final triumph (p. 114). But the term "Israel" is not understood here in a narrow political sense; it is understood rather as denoting those who are truly disciples of the Torah. This word, as the author points out, is broader than "law," and designates any kind of divine instruction.

The author is not only a loyal Jew in his estimate of Israel's place in history past and future, but he is also an ardent admirer of the rabbi as a whole. "Rabbinic theology," he says, "is equal to the highest aspirations of the religious man of various modes of thought" (p. 2); and again, in words that will seem to some of his readers extreme, he describes the rabbis as "a simple, naïve people, filled with a childlike scriptural faith" (p. 42). This means the rabbis of past centuries *as a class*. The author would of course admit that there have been many exceptions to this rule. But while the author is confessedly a reverent pupil of rabbinical theology, his book is free from anti-Christian polemic. He says that he does not profess to understand Paul (p. 18), and in another connection (p. 164) he intimates that Paul's judgment of the Law was erroneous, but nowhere do we find intemperate or bitter language in the the references to Christian theology.

If Dr. Schechter's book is taken as what it professes to be, a treatment of *Some Aspects of Rabbinical Theology*, not as a history of Jewish doctrine, it is fitted to render good service to biblical students.

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<sup>3</sup>*Some Aspects of Rabbinical Theology*. By S. Schechter. New York: Macmillan, 1909. xxiii + 384 pages. \$2.25.

Dr. M. Friedländer of Vienna would like to reconcile Judaism and Christianity. For this purpose he tries to show that the genuine Judaism is not to be found with the Pharisees but in the Dispersion, and that it was here that Christianity originated. Whereas, however, in his former publications Friedländer spoke mainly of the Greek dispersion, now he believes that he has discovered that Christianity had its origin in the country beyond the Jordan, in Perea.<sup>4</sup> He agrees with Professor W. B. Smith in concluding from Epiphanius that the Nazarenes lived before Christ. But as we pointed out in a review of the book (*Am. Jour. Theol.*, 1907, pp. 327 ff.) this is quite impossible. But even so, it could not be proved that John the Baptist and Jesus were dependent upon such a Perean movement. Friedländer quotes Matt. 4:14 ff.: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet saying: The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." But it is by Christ's settling in Capernaum that this prophecy of Isaiah's is considered as being fulfilled; the country beyond the Jordan is only mentioned because it was in the citation from Isaiah. Still more precarious is Friedländer's statement that Christ preached in Gadara; for even if in Mark 5:1 Gadara and not Gerasa, i. e., Kursi, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, were mentioned, in vs. 17 the inhabitants of that town are said to have besought Christ to depart from their borders, i. e., not to preach there. Dalmanutha and Magadan—for so the names in Mark 8:10 and Matt. 15:39 must be spelled—are probably not to be sought in Perea at all, but in Galilee. There thus remain only a few passages in which Christ is related to have preached in Perea. Friedländer's theory that Christianity originated there is therefore entirely untenable.

The leading modern scholars, especially Harnack, consider the Gnostics as the first Christian theologians and derive their ideas, in the main at least, from the Greek philosophy. Dr. Bousset<sup>5</sup> in his latest book combats this theory and sides with those scholars, modern or older, who hold opposite views. With Gruppe he considers the Gnostics as men, who were not of exceptional ability, and with Baur and Lipsius, Kessler and Brandt, Anz and again Gruppe he traces some of their ideas back to oriental religions, especially to those of the Babylonians and Persians. It is true these ideas are not fundamental in Gnosticism, but only of subordinate importance;

<sup>4</sup>*Synagoge und Kirche in ihren Anfängen.* Von M. Friedländer. Berlin: Reimer, 1908. 247 pages. M. 5.

<sup>5</sup>*Hauptprobleme der Gnosis.* Von Wilhelm Bousset. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck und Ruprecht, 1907. 398 pages. M. 12.

still in what he says about the origin of these ideas, Dr. Bousset is probably right.

Doubtless the seven spirits, which play an important part in many gnostic systems, were originally the seven planets venerated by the later Babylonians and subordinated to their supreme god by the Persians. Perhaps also the Mother is identical with Istar or Atargatis or Kybele or Anartis or Astarte and the Unknown Father with Ahura Mazda. In the same way the dualism of the Gnostics may be of Persian origin; but all these ideas are not so important as those which Dr. Bousset treats in the following chapters.

The conception of the Original Man, which occurs in some gnostic systems, in the pseudo-Clementine writings, in Mandaism and Manichaeism and which above all is at the bottom of the Jewish and Christian speculation concerning the Son of Man who is to appear at the end of the age, is also of Persian origin. So probably is the idea of elements, including the sun and the moon as heavenly beings, which we find in Gal. 4:3, 9 and Col. 2:8, 20. Even the gnostic idea of the Savior who descends from heaven to the earth or to the underworld seems to have been known to Paul when he writes (I Cor. 2:8): "God's wisdom none of the rulers of this world hath known; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

On the other hand I cannot convince myself that the theory of Christ's descent to Hades which we find in some passages of the New Testament had such an origin; it can be explained quite satisfactorily from the Jewish ideas about the life after death. Nor has the appearance of John the Baptist, as far as I can see, anything to do with gnostic baptisms. Likewise I must answer in the negative Bousset's question whether the Lord's Supper (in a hypothetical oldest form) originated in gnostic meals at which bread and salt were eaten. However, all these questions are raised by Bousset only incidentally; what he says about the origin of gnostic ideas, is probably true, at least in the hypothetical form in which he sometimes puts it.

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

It is very difficult to maintain neutrality in the midst of the storm and stress period which the historical study of religion, and particularly of Christianity, has introduced. Yet that is what Professor Clemen has